

52 Ancestors in 52 Weeks – Week 15: Out Of Place – What Happened to Martha Jane Polly
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Martha Jane Polly, the daughter of Nathan H.O. Polly, married George W. Lancaster on 25 October 1871 in Kaufman County, Texas.¹ George was nearly twenty years older than Martha.

They were together in 1880 in Rockwall County, which had been carved out of Kaufman County in, with three children: William Carlton, Lonnie O, and Maggie R.²

Then, Martha disappeared. I assumed that she died, but there were no records of her death, nor records of her burial in Kaufman, Rockwall, or Erath County, where George W. ended up.³

For many years, she was a mystery. The lack of the 1890 census made it difficult to discover what had happened to the children, except for William Carlton, who married Martha Jane Coor in Erath County, Texas on 19 March 1892.⁴ William Carlton was my second great-grandfather.

Then one day I received an email from Eddi Hagemann. Unfortunately, I don't have those first email correspondences from her saved.⁵ But she pointed out that Martha Jane Polly had married Noah Flood Parks and lived in Tulare County, California, where she died on 7 April 1932. She had the names of the children of George and Martha, the same ones I knew from the 1880 census, plus the children born after the census, George Eldon, Reginold F., and Jesse Polly.

We continued corresponding as we learned of what happened to George and Martha's children in California. Since then, I have discovered even more records of George and Martha that helped unravel the mystery of the time of their marriage until the divorce in 1993 in Maricopa County in the Territory of Arizona.⁶ I am still finding records of their time together before the move to Arizona.⁷

Her obituary tied her to the Martha in Texas. Carrie mentioned in the obituary was William Carlton.

"Mrs. Mattie Parks To Be Buried Here Saturday Morning" Interment of the body of Mrs. Mattie Jane Parks, 75, of Orosi, mother of J. P. Lancaster of Pixley and G. E. Lancaster of Tipton, will be made in the Tulare cemetery following funeral services in Dinuba at the Dopkins parlors Saturday at 11 a. m., according to word received here today. Mrs. Parks died Thursday morning in Orosi at the home of a daughter, Mrs. Rose White. Three other children also survive. They are Carrie Lancaster of Texas, R. F. Lancaster of Atascadero, and Mrs. W. J. Harper of Los Angeles."⁸

¹ Kaufman Co, Texas, Marriages, 2: 51, Geo W. Lancaster-Martha J. Polly, 1871; FHL microfilm 1302500.

² 1880 U.S. census, Rockwall Co, Texas, pop. sched., Rockwall Village, ED 30, George W. Lancaster, digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 13 Jul 1995), NARA T9, roll-1324.

³ He was listed as single in the household of Sarge Hickey in the 1900: 1900 U.S. census, Erath County, Texas, pop sched, Stephenville, ED 65, sheet 5, Geo. W. Lancaster, digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 13 Jul 1995), NARA T623.

⁴ Erath County, Texas, Marriages, Bk F, p 65, W.C. Lancaster & Miss Mattie Coor, 1892, FHL film 1026025.

⁵ In the early 2000s, I was using a stand-alone email program and was not able to save the emails in a form that was usable. I regret not printing out the emails.

⁶ Pima County, Arizona, RG 110, Superior Court Records, SG 8 case 2250, Lancaster v. Lancaster, decree, 23 December 1893; Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records, Phoenix.

⁷ I have found land records in Johnson County and Dallas County, Texas.

⁸ "Mrs. Mattie Parks to be Buried Here Saturday Morning," *Tulare (California) Daily Advance Register*, 8 Apr 1932, p. 1.

A descendant discovered a query on a genealogy website and answered my mystery of what happened to Martha Jane Polly Lancaster. She just was not where I had expected her to be. To see a photo of Martha and her husband Noah Parks, see her memorial on [Find A Grave](#).

This is my second year working on this year-long prompt, hosted by [Amy Johnson Crow](#). I will write each week in one of my two blogs, either [Mam-ma's Southern Family](#) or [My Trails Into the Past](#). I have enjoyed writing about my children's ancestors in new and exciting ways.